

THE WASHINGTON HERALD

DRAMATIC DEPARTMENT.

HECTOR FULLER.

Editor

PROGRAMME FOR THE WEEK.

National.....	"The Squaw Man"	Chase's.....	Vaudeville
Columbia.....	"Miss Hook of Holland"	Majestic.....	"The Boy with the Boodle"
Belasco.....	"Glorious Betsy"	The Lyceum.....	Barlesque
Academy.....	"Edna, the Pretty Typewriter"	The Gayety.....	Barlesque

The Players and the Season.

Scattered far and wide this Christmas season are the players. The joys of home and the happy friends, with friends about the hearth and good cheer on the board is not for them. "Good will toward men" they know, of indeed, for there is scarce a hamlet in the length and breadth of the land to which some company of them is not contributing happiness and joy. While comfortable families, happy since first at early morn they were awakened by the laughter and glad cries of surprise of the children, come down to the theater to be amused, the players in many a cheerless dressing-room must don the disguises of their art; paint their faces once more, and "strut their little hour upon the stage."

And yet, these are not the most unfortunate ones. This year has been a hard one on the players, and in every large city are gathered many of them out of work and with scant prospects until the beginning of another season—a long way in the future. For many of these, perchance, there will be no Christmas dinner. For the more fortunate ones who enjoy the privilege of work there will be Christmas dinner at some caravanary—a mere meal with naught of the spirit of the Christmas season about it.

Indeed, ye player folk, we owe you much! And with the coming of Christmas we seem to realize the debt more keenly. You have your privileges, and by the very nature of the nomad life you lead, you shake off the shackles of convention which bind so many of us; you look at life with a broader view and you breathe a freer air. And that, too, is a privilege of which winter wrote:

There is no richer or more abiding glory to be gained on earth than is secured in the exercise of nobility of influence upon humanity, and especially upon the development of the young, and this privilege is particularly within the grasp of the actor.

But at this blessed season when most of us feel drawn closer in some mysterious, but beautiful, way to the Christian virtues; when "home" takes on a tender and larger meaning; when the spirit of loving-kindness and good-fellowship, and the friendship seems to tingle in the air—we think of you, the players, whom Churchill designated as—

The struggling tribe; a despicable race as men and women who sacrifice much to add to the happiness of the world. We know you as faithful servants of the public, separated from those you love, far from home; subject to discomfort, often misunderstood, and yet going bravely and uncomplainingly on, giving up your own joys to the joy of others.

And this word to all you, wherever you be this Christmas-tide! Would we could see you gathered round a real Christmas fireside; a board groaning with good cheer, and the inn all decked with holly and evergreens. Would that we could cry, too, with good, old Palfrey:

Hostess, call to the doors; watch to-night, pray to-morrow—Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all titles of good-fellowship come to you! What shall we merry? Shall we have a play extempore?

But as that is impossible, let us believe that on Wednesday you are keeping Christmas in your hearts and souls. May some of the joy, which in your lives and work you have conveyed to others, return to you this Christmas season and bring you peace and love and happiness. A merry, merry Christmas to you, players all. God be with you and grant you a happy New Year!

A Question of Criticism.

There has always been more or less discussion as to the value of dramatic criticism written by busy critics in the wee small hours immediately after having witnessed a first night's production of a play. It has been held, and with more or less justice, that a critic, under such conditions, is scarcely able to bring to bear the best of his critical faculties. To say nothing of the fact that a first night's production of a big play is almost always sure to be faulty in some particulars, it is true that a critic in the rush and hurry consequent upon a waiting hungry press, has but little time to think seriously about the play, in all its relations to art, to various aspects of life, and to literature.

Such first impressions are likely, indeed, to prove considerable hardship, first on the theatergoing public, which has a right to demand from the daily press adequate and more or less scholarly criticism, secondly on the managers, who have in many cases spent thousands of dollars and have worked for months in making the production, and thirdly on the players, who have also worked for a period of rehearsals without salary and depending upon the success of the play for their compensation.

In Paris it has been the custom to hold dress rehearsals of all new productions to which critics are invited, and one of the most prominent of Parisian morning newspapers has announced its intention of publishing its notices of new plays the morning after the dress rehearsal instead of the morning after the first night. The dress rehearsal in Paris was an institution invented for the benefit of the critics, who are thus enabled to write their articles at their leisure in the daytime instead of hurriedly after the first night.

It seems that the Parisian theater managers object seriously to the plan of writing criticisms from the dress rehearsal. One solution of the problem has been found by a morning paper in Paris, which announces its intention of publishing a concise summary of the plot of the play the morning after the dress rehearsal and holding its critical article until the day after the first night, thus satisfying the demand for news and at the same time maintaining the high literary standard.

This plan, it should seem, would be an ideal solution of the difficulties of criticism. Surely, in the case of a big new production one day's delay could make little difference to the public or the managers, especially when the public would find itself better served and might rely with greater force on the critical opinions of the press than it can do under the present circumstances.

Week Preceding Christmas.

The week that has just closed was a rather disappointing one at the local theaters. The attendance at no playhouse was very large; it seems to be the week before Christmas, as people are busy shopping and apt to consider that the four dollars they would have to spend for theater tickets might be better used for additional presents. It was perhaps in recognition of the fact that the week before Christmas is a bad one theaterically that the Belasco Theater management made little effort to get booking for the entire week.

The Lipzin Yiddish players, who gave two performances in the early part of the week, proved somewhat of a disappointment to those who could not understand the language. The company was in no way remarkable for talent, and indeed, it seemed—so much was the prompter in evidence—as if the players had been gathered hastily together for the two special performances.

At the Columbia Theater "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," with May Robson in the title role, proved to be a mild-yet pleasing diversion. It could hardly be said to be a play at all, and although some interest is attached to the trials and tribulations of Aunt Mary, it seems extremely doubtful whether such a play has a chance of ultimate success. If it has, it means the breaking up of a time-worn tradition in American theatricals—that the figure of a middle-aged woman and incidents in her life have never possessed any real interest for the American public. The play goes into New York to-morrow. It appears to be questionable whether it will last more than a week or two.

The largest throngs of the week went to the National to see those excellent buffoons, the Rogers Brothers. Their new vehicle gives them abundant opportunity for the sort of fun-making which they do so well, and they—realizing, of course, that they themselves are the central attractions—do not make the mistake of backing themselves up with a cheap comedy. The performance was bright and lively from beginning to end, thoroughly enjoyable, and free from any suggestion of coarseness or vulgarity. It is not unlikely that before the season ends the Rogers Brothers will play a return engagement. It is to be hoped that they will. There is always a reward and a welcome for a good, clean show like theirs.

NOTES OF THE STAGE.

Eleanor Barry has joined Ezra Kendall's company as leading woman.

Claixon Wilstach has joined the business staff of Henry W. Savage.

Cecil Owen has gone to Indianapolis to join the Majestic stock company.

Viola Allen is about to begin rehearsals for her tour starts early in January.

The parents of Gus and Max Rogers celebrated their golden wedding on Sunday night.

Henrietta Crossman, who has been on the sick list with grip, is on the road to recovery.

Valeska Surratt is back to the vaudeville field; so is Fanny Rice. Both appeared in Brooklyn.

"The Prince of Pilsen" was produced in Paris last Thursday night. It duplicated its London success.

Frank L. Perley has lost his suit against the Shuberts, the higher courts having sustained the appeal.

Fuller Mellich has signed with Mrs. Fiske. His engagement at the Lyric, New York, begins on December 30.

Mme. Nordica has retired from the Manhattan Opera House company owing to a disagreement with Oscar Hammerstein.

The Empire Theater in St. Paul, which was burned out on December 3, is to be rebuilt, the cost involving an expenditure of over \$100,000.

Lewis Waller has secured the American rights to a play called "The Explorer." These most likely will be turned over to James K. Hackett.

A new song entitled "I Wish I Could Find the Man who Wrote the Merry Widow Waltz," has been introduced into "His Honor the Mayor."

Henry W. Savage is busy organizing a company for the purpose of presenting "The Merry Widow" in Philadelphia for an extended engagement.

Herbert Wilke wishes to deny that he has retired from the stage. He is now playing Giant in "The Claim of the Blood," with Walker Whiteside.

Ernest Lawford will have the principal part in William Gillette's new play, "That Little Affair at Boyd's," which is now being rehearsed by Winchel Smith.

William Collier and Francis Wilson have submitted scenarios to Charles Frohman for new plays for themselves. Both scenarios have been accepted.

The January bookings at the New National include "The Man of the Hour," "The Red Mill," Lew Dockstader's Minstrels, and "Classmates."

Tully Marshall has been engaged by Wagenhals & Kemper for a prominent role in "Paid in Full," which will be offered in Montreal next Monday night.

Elsie Janis and the members of "The Hoyden" company will eat their Christmas dinner on the stage of the Illinois Theater, Chicago, where they will caper holiday week.

Robert Burns Mantle, who has established a reputation for himself as a dramatic writer, has joined the staff of the Chicago Tribune, in full charge of the dramatic department.

Among the operas to be produced at the Belasco Theater in January by the San Carlo Opera Company, will be "La Gioconda," which met with great success in Boston last week.

James A. Bliss, the somewhat stout comedian, who has been with the "Rogers Brothers in Panama" since August 13, will sever his connection with the company in Baltimore, Md., December 28.

Wallace Edginger, appearing with Robert Edson in "Classmates," was the original Little Lord Fauntleroy. He last appeared in Washington with Willie Collier in "Caught in the Rain."

PLAYS AND PLAYFOLK.

Wallace Edginger, Marjorie Wood, and Sydney Alsworth are the latest engagements for the cast of "The Sinner," the play to be tried by Robert Edson in Philadelphia on December 31.

Eugene Blair has given up "The Rose of the South" in order to play several stock engagements. At present she is located in Cleveland at the Majestic, appearing in her former successes.

Florenz Ziegfeld is offering a prize of \$500 for the best waltz composition submitted and written by an American. Mr. Ziegfeld is of the opinion that the title "Waltz King" belongs on this side of the Atlantic.

During the engagement of "The Rose of the South" in Providence, Frank Lossee disappeared from the company. He subsequently turned up at his hotel mentally depressed, and is now in the care of a physician.

Charlotte Walker has scored the greatest triumph of her career as Agatha Warren in David Belasco's production of "The Warrens of Virginia," now packing the Belasco Theater at every performance in New York.

Bernhardt Niemeyer, a Washington boy, who is making rapid strides in character work, is with "The Squaw Man" at the New National this week. He is playing the part of "Andy," the German cowboy.

Audrey Boucault was struck by an electric cab while crossing Broadway one day last week and painfully bruised. He had to give up his role in "The Sacred Orchard," and his place was taken by William Courtney.

The scene of "Gloria," Miss Julia Marlowe's new play, by James Fagan, is in sixteenth century Italy, and the star's role will bear substantial similarity to that of Mary Tudor in "When Knights Rode Was in Flower."

On February 8, at Keith & Proctor's Union Square Theater, Miss Fanny Rice will make her farewell appearance in vaudeville. Next season she returns to the comic opera stage in a new opera specially written for her.

Supporting Mr. E. M. Holland, in J. K. Hackett's production of "The House of a Thousand Candles," will be Stephen Grattan, Darrel Standing, Mabel Ruebeck, and Frank E. Aiken.

In Chicago two weeks ago Mr. J. K. Hackett, in "John Gayde's Honor," played in opposition to his other new production, "The House of a Thousand Candles," which will be seen at the Belasco Theater as the New Year's attraction.

Sam Bernard's first appearance on any stage was as a star comedian in a 5-cent side show. Bernard recalls the breaking up of the enterprise by a gang of youngsters and his subsequent escape with the gross receipts—\$5 cents.

Robert T. Haines, in company with Mrs. Haines, is to enter the managerial branch of the theatrical business and will engage in the production of new plays. Western capitalists are said to be backing the venture. Mr. Haines will not leave the stage.

Mr. Bruce McRea has been selected to be the star of "Tiddlers" in the place of Mr. Joe Coyne. "Tiddlers" will be produced by the Rogers Brothers, who have in London, "Tiddlers" was played successfully last season in England by Mr. Cyril Maude.

Mr. Samuel T. Kilwans, of this city, now playing with Carotta Nilsson in "The Three of Us," has been engaged by Manager Will A. Page to appear this spring and summer with the stock company which is to play at the Belasco Theater.

The first new play of length in which Arnold Daly will appear at the Berkeley Theater will be a dramatization of Owen Kildare's autobiographical story, "My Mamie Rose." The production will probably follow the revival of "Candida," after the holidays.

Leon and Viola Flugrath, the two children acting in "The Squaw Man," will appear in the second scene from "The Merry Widow" at the home of Rosamunde Duff in Florida next week. The occasion will be a large children's party Thursday afternoon of this week.

Over two hundred companies are idle this week, with perhaps fifty of them doing nothing in Chicago, and a similar number laying off on the road. In many instances the managers find it cheaper to give their actors a week's vacation than to continue to play to empty benches.

The receiver in bankruptcy who was appointed by the court to get what it could out of Mrs. Leslie Carter is traveling with her company and nightly collects a share of the profits, which is to be distributed among the creditors, who, no doubt, will pay the referee's traveling expenses.

A new Betty has been engaged to appear with May Robson in "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary" at the Madison Square Theater commencing December 28. Through the offices of Daniel Frohman, L. S. Stie has engaged Miss Josephine Drake, who will make her first appearance in that role at the opening performance.

There are more than seventy persons in "Miss Hook of Holland," which Charles Frohman will present for its American premier at the Columbia Theater, Monday evening. Lovers of the quaint and picturesque in costume will have an exceptional opportunity to indulge their taste when the big production comes to this city.

Now that Frederic Thompson has launched one play he is going to start work on "The Fortune Hunters," and this will be followed by a production of "The Merry Widow" by the Charles Taylor stock company, which held forth at the New Lyceum the season before last. Mr. Curley is busy writing a new burlesque in which he and Miss Mollie Williams are to be exploited next season.

The remarkable values of "Marta of the Lowlands," in which Bertha Kalich is achieving her greatest success under the direction of Harrison Grey Fiske, as well as the universality of its interests is shown by the fact that it has been employed as the subject of an opera by Eugene d'Al-

bert. This opera was produced in Berlin last month, and has since been repeated at the Staat Theater, in Leipzig. In its German form the work is entitled "The Lullaby."

If present negotiations come to a successful issue, it is more than likely that Will M. Cressy and Blanche Dayne will begin their deferred starring tour under the management of the Shuberts early in 1908. They will appear in a three-act version of "The Village Lawyer," one of Mr. Cressy's sketches, which he is writing in collaboration with J. Clarence Harvey. New England will be the first territory to be covered by these popular players.

Charles Frohman will next week make two moves on the chess board of American stardom that will be at utter variance with the usual way of playing the game of the theater. He will take the Maude Adams out of "Peter Pan" in the fall flush of its popularity and send John Drew on a tour in the midst of his most prosperous season at the Empire Theater. Mr. Drew's tour will extend as far South as New Orleans and as far West as San Francisco.

Arrangements have been made for Miss Blanche Walsh to appear this season in the Astor Theater in a translation of a play which Miss Bernhardt will produce in Paris on Wednesday. The title of the play is "The Belle of the Bois Dormant." It will be changed to "Prince Charming" for the production here. The play is by M. Jean Richelieu and Henri Cain, with music by M. Francis Thome, and is in fourteen tableaux. Messrs Wagenhals & Kemper have the American rights to it.

Florence Roberts will give the first performance on any stage of "Sham" in Los Angeles, Cal., on December 25, described as a new modern play in three acts by Geraldine Bonner and Elmer B. Harris. On the same day a copyright performance of the play will be given at the Adelphi Theater, London, by courtesy of George Tyler and Liebler & Co. A New York engagement for Miss Roberts in "Sham" is contemplated, provided the play proves a satisfactory vehicle.

It is not unlikely that when Mary Manning concludes her present tour in "Glorious Betsy," she will go to Australia, to appear there and in London. Negotiations are now pending, and it is just possible the contract will be signed in a few weeks. If Miss Manning concludes to accept the offer, she will appear in "Glorious Betsy," "Janice Meredith," "Trelawny of the Wells," etc. She will also take with her an American company, which will include the present organization.

Appropos of the return of Margaret Illington to the part of the wife in "The Thief," Charles Frohman announces that, by an arrangement with Dan Frohman, a contract has been made whereby Miss Illington will play the role of Marie Louise Voysin for the next two seasons. Miss Illington has found the character to be the most satisfying and the most beneficial of any she has ever played. Her contract has also been made with Kyrle Belle, who is in the part of the husband for the same length of time.

Fritz Scheff will on Sunday, December 22, complete one of the biggest railroad jumps with her large organization in "Mlle. Modiste" that has been made in recent years, arriving in St. Paul in the afternoon from Seattle, Wash., on a special train. The distance on this one "jump" was 1,913 miles. From St. Paul Madame Scheff will make another record-breaking movement, going to Columbus, Ohio. Three weeks after her departure from the Pacific Coast she will be playing an extended engagement on the Atlantic coast in Boston.

The surprising fact has just come to light that Henri Bernstein, the brilliant young author of "The Thief," will never content himself with a name of over six letters for any of his plays. Besides "Voleur" (the French title of "The Thief"), and "Samson," the last of Mr. Bernstein's plays purchased by Charles Frohman, Bernstein has written "Detour," "The Merry Widow," and "The Thief," which contains more than six letters. It is an interesting sidelight on a playwright whose works are highly imaginative, mathematical, ingenious, but in no wise mystical or suggestive of superstition.

Charles Frohman considers Washington a favorite city for premiere presentations of his productions. That manager declares that in this city he finds just the right sort of clientele to determine the merits of any dramatic offering. As he puts it: "In Washington we have the most cosmopolitan city in the world. More over, not only do we have representatives of every nation in the world here, but their most cultured representatives. Those who make their homes here during the winter are for the most part diplomats, scholars, and travelers. All have seen the managers and most of the best and their tastes, consequently, are most urbane and nice. Any play that wins the endorsements of Washington audiences may safely be said to possess all the essentials of success."

Before Warfield Was Famous.

Speaking the other day of "A Grand Army Man" and Mr. Belasco's noted star, an old actor said of David Warfield: "Warfield has always been a pretty genuine sort of fellow. I remember in the early days on tour there used to be some tough times. We knew what it was once in a while to go hungry."

In one of those times Dave got an unexpected invitation to dine with him. When we reached the table there he sat, shamefaced and apologetic, with his well-cleaned plate before him. He explained that he was so hungry he couldn't wait. Our chops were brought to us, and we all went to the theater happy.

Two or three days later the two guests were again at the same little restaurant, and chatted with our waitress. "Say," she said, "that's a pretty good-hearted fellow you were with. He couldn't afford to order for three of you the other night, so he made me get him a greasy plate so as to make you chaps think he had eaten before you came."

An Ophelia Really Insane.

In Percy Fitzgerald's "History of the English Stage" there is an interesting story of Mrs. Verbruggen, who became insane through the treachery of a friend, the actress Santlow. One day, during a lucid interval, she asked her attendant what play was to be performed that evening, and was told that it was "Hamlet." In this play she had won one of her greatest triumphs in the character of Ophelia, and with that cunning which is usually allied to insanity, she found means to elude the care of her servants and hurried to the theater. Here she concealed herself until the moment when her husband was to make her appearance in his insane state, and then, before Miss Santlow could play the part that evening, could make her entrance, she pushed by her on to the stage and at once took up the role, giving a far more perfect impersonation of mad Ophelia than the most exertions of mime art could do. She was, in truth, Ophelia herself, and the storm of applause with which her exit was greeted dumfounded the performers and overwhelmed her rival. This last effort, however, exhausted her vital powers, and she died while being conveyed home.

NEW YORK THEATERS.

Special Correspondence The Washington Herald.

New York, Dec. 20.—Channing Pollock's play, "The Secret Orchard," has called out a widely-diversified discussion among the papers, some of which praise it or give it a demerit for its artistic or artistic qualities. Says the Mail (to cite a characteristic example): "Mr. Pollock's task was to fill in this outline; to make it compact and tense; to pull its loose ends together; to cause it to appear natural and logical, and he has not done so very well." Says the Globe: "A carefully written, closely knit, dramatic and interesting play."

Now, if Mr. Pollock has failed to make his play compact and tense and has not pulled its loose ends together, it cannot be carefully written and closely knit; and if the doctors disagree, the patient must take his chances with nature, and so be taken between extravagant praise and more or less amusing perfunctory at the expense of the author and his play, the public has an opportunity to judge for itself what the Lyric has to offer.

Whatever the merits of the play, the acting was beyond cavil. Although played on tour for several weeks, the management put the play in the hands of Henry Miller before taking it into New York, and with a number of changes made in the cast, came before the local players under the best possible auspices. The principal roles were taken by William Courtney as the Duke, Adelaide Prince as the Duchess, Duke Dawson, who may be remembered as playing the doctor in "The Shulamite" with Lena Ashwell, and Josephine Victor as Joy. Others in the cast were Frank C. Bangs as the canon, Olive May, grown much older, as Mrs. Rodriguez, and Henrietta Vaders, likewise developed in her role since she was Edwin Booth's leading woman, as the Marquise of Lorraine. These names to conjure with in the light of history and historic traditions, with the possible exception of Miss Victor, and she acquitted herself triumphantly for a neophyte in the leading role of the girl with the devilish eyes.

It is not unlikely that when Mary Manning concludes her present tour in "Glorious Betsy," she will go to Australia, to appear there and in London. Negotiations are now pending, and it is just possible the contract will be signed in a few weeks. If Miss Manning concludes to accept the offer, she will appear in "Glorious Betsy," "Janice Meredith," "Trelawny of the Wells," etc. She will also take with her an American company, which will include the present organization.

This was the other premier event of the week and was exhibited, not exactly for the first time, at Wallack's, for it has traveled under at least two aliases and once was known at the New York Theater as "Mansfield's Hamlet." It is a musical comedy by Robert D. Smith, brother of Harry B. Smith, music by Raymond Hubbell, whose name first became known as the composer of the music for "Runaway Girl," as the young man who married beautiful Helen Lord and later composed "Fantasia." As "Mansfield's Hamlet" it lost a small fortune for John C. Fisher, of "Floradora" fame, but in its present rejuvenated state, with John Smith as the uncouth and diminutive waiter, and May Vokes in one of her characteristic slave roles, with other embellishments, "A Knight for a Day" promises to repeat here the success it scored in Chicago, where, if this scribe is not mistaken, it is still something of a standard attraction. A strong appeal is made by the brilliant stage effects and the movements of a dimpled and sprightly chorus in ravishing costumes, but particularly by the light effects employed as necessary to the singing of "Life Is a See-Saw."

James K. Hackett will have a new leading woman when he presents "John Gayde's Honor" for the first time in this city Monday evening at Daly's. Her name is Miss Daragh, an English actress, who refuses to reveal her given name. This notwithstanding she is well known in London, and in his first appearance in America to play the devoted wife in Suro's drama. Interest in her has been wrought up by such preliminary work, and since Billie Burke came from London and surprised people who did not know that she was an American girl, it is not surprising that under Miss Daragh's partial anonymity there is another revelation of an American girl winning fame in London before being recognized in her own country. I'm sure I don't know that this is the case, but it wouldn't surprise me at all. She has played with Arthur Boucher, Cyril Maude, and Lewis Waller, and when "Salome" was prohibited by the censor, she appeared in the role before the National Sporting Club at private. In addition, she has been in the most brilliant performance of some of William Butler Yeats' plays in Dublin.

A thrill was created by the announcement that Edgar Smith is to play at the Lyric. When you hear that it was Edgar Smith who for ten years past has supplied the Weberfeldian extravaganzas which contributed so much to the success of the famous Broadway music hall, the shock will not seem unnatural. According to the published statement of the sedulous librettist, the split resulted from Col. Savage's reluctance to encoeurage upon Col. Savage's rights in "The Merry Widow," which he had been commissioned to produce.

There is no copyright with Austria and no one can produce the score of "The Merry Widow," so that, legally, Savage would have no recourse in restraining Weber from playing the whole of the music in what might simply be called a burlesque on "The Merry Widow." This, according to Edgar, caused him to revolt, and as a result he is no longer identified with the famous burlesque house. The work has been placed in the hands of another librettist, Julian Mitchell, who will stage it, and Lulu Glaser will sing the Widow.

Smith's future movements, which at present are still problematic, will be watched with interest. He is one of a famous trio that came out of St. Louis years ago and made their mark in the metropolis. Just twenty-two years ago a small organization of St. Louis amateur actors ventured upon the stormy main of a regularly booked route under the name of the Dickson Sketch Club, presenting a farce called "Combustion" and a one-act playlet called "Editha's Burglar." Both were written or dramatized by Augustus Thomas, then a reporter on the Post-Dispatch, and played by Thomas himself, assisted by a dainty little girl who afterward achieved fame as Della Fox, and by Edgar Smith and Frank Davis. The manager was William Smyth. It was hard plodding and traveling on trunks and promises, but the Dickson Sketch Club hung together the whole of the season and covered territory from St. Paul to New Orleans.

Thomas became playmaker for A. M. Palmer, and one time, when Palmer was at a loss for a play, Thomas offered him "Alabama" and won triumph. Frank Davis lived long enough to score a hit as a comic opera, Della Fox climbed the top of the ladder, and to her decline, Edgar Smith became librettist for Weber & Field, and Smyth, who became a genuine manager and afterward achieved a striking success with an elaborate production of "Editha's Burglar," which captivated New York, and brought out Willie Collier in "On the

Quiet" married Sydney Armstrong, the well-known actress, and is now on the executive staff of David Belasco and manager of the Belasco Theater.

Mrs. George Jay Gould, who, since she was known as Edith Kingston on the stage of Augustin Daly, has acted but once, and then in strict privacy, in "The Twilight of the Gods," on an improvised stage of the coach house of Georgian Court (December 21, 1899), is to make her second appearance on the stage January 21 next, at the Plaza Hotel in this city for a benefit for the "Older" who will be present, and there will be only one performance. Mrs. Gould will have a sprightly role, and will be assisted by Kyrle Belle, and, unless there is a change in the present programme, by Mme. Nordica, who will play her maid. The comedy is by Edward Van Zile, and is called "Mrs. Van Vechten's Divorce Suit."

Paul Armstrong, the author of "The Heir of the Hurrah" and "Salome Jane," is probably the only American playwright who has ever indulged in the luxury of publicly stating his contempt for the producing manager. On sundry occasions has Mr. Armstrong expressed his opinions in sarcastic terms that rankled in the breasts of his enemies. No newspaper man ever came to him for anything expressive about managers, but Mr. Armstrong hesitated to let out the link in avowing his conviction that managers were in existence for no purpose other than to prevent playwrights from making successful plays. He could point to "Salome Jane" as an emergency play that had been written in six days, rehearsed, and put on in posthaste order just as he (Mr. Armstrong) had written it, and had pulled Miss Eleanor Robson out of a critical snafu moment for a triumph. To his credit he said that this was the only conviction. There are managers right now in New York who would jump at the chance to produce one of Armstrong's plays, and would only ask him to play and play again his independent part of the rub. He claims to know better than any one else how his plays should be staged, and until he is ready to give up the career, he will have to be his own producer.

Now Mr. Armstrong has just made a trial with a new play in Baltimore. He calls it by the expressive title, "Society and the Bulldog," and in it he reincarnates sundry familiar Western types with which his two notable successes have been scored. The comedy was tried out by the Fawcett Stock Company, with William Farnum in the principal role, and the piece is now in its second week.

Well, Mr. Armstrong is meeting the challenging party on his own ground, and announces his second independent move to take place in Chicago, January 18, with William Farnum and Cecilia Loftus in "Society and the Bulldog."

When five years ago Armstrong could not prevail upon any manager to produce a play of his, being then unknown to fame, he temporarily abandoned his newspaper career in New York and started out to shift for himself as a play producer. With "St. Ann" he opened in Washington, Laura Nelson Hall playing the title role. He expected to receive a hurry call to display his goods at one of the Broadway houses, but instead was given a route in the coal region of Pennsylvania during a miners' strike. "St. Ann" had been floated, but Mr. Armstrong was not looking for a coal mining, and his enterprise succumbed to the adverse sales at Norfolk. That was the foundation of his antipathy to managers. He tried again with a farce comedy, which was produced in New York, and failed. He returned to his newspaper work and tried again. A dozen managers read "The Heir of the Hurrah," and declined it. The late Kirk La Shelle accepted it, made certain alterations, and Armstrong leaped into fame.

As a rule, when a playwright has one success to his credit, everything he has ever written takes on an exaggerated value, and he does not lack for patrons. But, although Armstrong has half a dozen plays in his trunk, he has consistently refused to let others tamper with them, even on assured prospects of securing productions for them, and he is now planning a second invasion of the managerial field, with the confident expectation of reaping the fruit of his labor, both as a producer and a playwright. He has for a term of years been "Society and the Bulldog," has exhausted its popularity, he will bring him out in an American tragedy in which Farnum will probably play an Indian. Cecilia Loftus' defection from Henry's standard means the failure of "The Laureate" at Daly's and her acquisition by Armstrong as leading woman. Farnum thus abandons his legitimate and semi-legitimate theatrical circles will be going to show he and the eccentric playwright-manager will make out together in their joint departure from established lines.

FRED. F. SCHRAEDER.

A Musician's Reproof.

Even in the days of Colley Cibber, the musical genius seems often to have been subjected to the same annoying indifference and impoliteness so common in New York at the present day. Cibber himself gives this example:

"While the famous Corelli, at Rome, was playing some musical composition of his own to a select company in the private apartment of his patron cardinal, he observed, in the height of his harmony, his eminence was engaged in a detached conversation, upon which he suddenly stopped and gave lay down his instrument. The cardinal, surprised at the unexpected cessation, asked him if a string was broken. To which Corelli, in an honest consciousness of what was said to him, replied: 'No, sir; I was only afraid I interrupted you.' His eminence took the reproof in good part and broke off his conversation to hear the whole concerto played over again."